



## THE RITSON TRAIL & HERITAGE TRAILS AROUND WHITROPE

NAMED AFTER THE VICTORIAN CONTRACTOR WILLIAM RITSON, THE MAN RESPONSIBLE FOR SHANKEND VIADUCT, WHITROPE TUNNEL & SUMMIT AND RICCARTON JUNCTION.

STARTING POINT: Whitrope Heritage Centre. Heading in an anti-clockwise direction. Distance approx 5 miles.

Take extreme care when in the vicinity of forestry or railway operations.

Take the course of the Waverley Route, southwards through the large cutting and over Laidlehope Culvert. Look out for Buzzards overhead, and at the southeast of the cutting one of the old sheepfolds, hidden amongst the trees on the left.

Almost at Riccarton Junction, you can take the path down to the right, to Will's Bothy, the ideal spot to get your flask and sandwiches out.

Continuing the trail, head up the small, steep, brae taking in the station master's house at Riccarton whilst passing by – please don't go over the fence though.

From here the Forestry track takes you all the way back to the B6399 road, but not before passing by several interesting features on the way.

The first is an old bridge down in Leysburn, on the left hand side. The main decking of the bridge has long since gone,

presumably removed for safety reasons. This bridge was part of the original path which led from Riccarton Junction to Phaupknowe farmhouse, then crossed the railway and headed towards Ninestane Rigg.

You will also notice the aquaduct which once took water for Riccarton and for the locomotives, running all the way down Leysburn. At times this is several feet high up, suspended from old pieces of bullhead rail which has been bent to form a high platform.

Around ½ mile further on, down the embankment, you might just be able to see the old weir which was constructed to allow water down through the aquaduct.

Heading north, and the next stop is a good stroll away. Once down the hill towards Quarry Brae, you will find a large pond created by the Forestry Commission at the head of Laidlehope Burn (about 50 yards to the right). Another ideal spot to take refreshments.

Heading up the other side of Quarry Brae, it is then homeward bound, but not before passing the site of the old limekiln works on the left hand side.

Here the lime for many of the local construction works would have been made. Lime mortar is abundant in most of the buildings in the area and it is almost certain that it would have originated from this limekiln. Such constructions include the railway cottages at Whitrope, Whitrope Tunnel, the houses at Riccarton, the Golden Bridge and possibly even Shankend Viaduct.

Back onto the road it is downhill all the way towards the Heritage Centre at Whitrope. We hope you enjoyed the walk and found it interesting.